(b) if so, the targets fixed and likely to be achieved;

(c) how the SAIL will achieve the export targets when it is suffering losses;

(d) whether to meet the export target, SAIL propose to take help of any financial institution; and

(e) if so, the details thereof.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY) : (a) Yes, Sir. SAIL's corporate strategy envisages exports of Iron and Steel materials on consistent basis in the next few years.

(b) SAIL have fixed a target of 7,00,000 MT for export of Iron and Steel during 2000-2001. This target is likely to be achieved.

(c) SAIL has been exporting its products at prices with positive contribution in line with international practice. Exports on sustained basis help in higher utilisation of the production capacities of the plants, stabilisation of prices in the domestic market, inventory control and export led growth in sales.

(d) and (e) Presently, SAIL does not propose to take help from any financial institution to meet the export targets. However, SAIL has been regularly availing pre-shipment export packing credit (EPC) which is offered by financial institutions.

Selling off Salem Steel Plant

3174 . SHRI RAMACHANDRAIAH RUMANDLA : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Salem Steel Plant is proposed to be sell off;

(b) if so, its impact on other Steel Plants; and

(c) the fate of workers of the Salem Steel Plant?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI DILIP RAY) : (a) to (c) The financial and business restructuring package for Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL) that has been approved by the Government includes, inter alia, formation of Joint Venture for Salem Steel Plant (SSP), while protecting the jobs of existing employees. Such joint venture would be beneficial to SAIL.